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Mr. Harold P. Lux
Foreign Affairs Legislative Assistant
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Lux:

Enclosed is the article you requested on Soviet Espionage in France. If I can be of further assistance, please give a call.

Sincerely,



Office of Legislative Liaison

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WESTERN EUROPE
ANNEXFRANCELE POINT VIEWS SOVIET ESPIONAGE IN FRANCE

PM041525 Paris LE POINT in French 25 Apr-1 May 83 pp 116-121 -- FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Jean-Marie Pontaut article: "Espionage: The KGB's Tricks"]

[Text] Bang! One morning the French people discovered that the president had meticulously organized a charter flight to Moscow for Soviet diplomats. They did not know that it was the (provisional) culmination of a long story.

Indeed, brushing aside his predecessors' normal precautions, Francois Mitterrand chose a more spectacular political game to put an end for a time to the tide of "technology snatchers" operating in France for the KGB -- the Eastern bloc's great economic and military war machine. But in fact the head of state had personally been very closely following affairs of industrial espionage or, as it is called, "the transfer of technology," since the start of his 7-year term. His decision to launch this great purge had been taken several months previously. All that remained to be done was to fill the files with irrefutable proof and to find a political opportunity.

After May 1981, the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance (DST), hampered by the LE CANARD ENCHAINE bugging affair and several other suspicions, had a rather bad press on the left. Marcel Chalet, who was its boss at the time, a policeman who had spent all his career in the "ST" as it is called in the dusty offices in the Rue des Saussaies, undertook to plead its cause. Armed with files and asked to explain his case, he went to defend his organization to [Interior Minister] Gaston Defferre and to the president himself. He was the only head of a police department to be received by Francois Mitterrand in person. The counterespionage boss explained to the head of state the vast plundering carried out by the Eastern bloc services, which were trapping French scientific secrets by every means imaginable. It was an industrial hemorrhage which was much more damaging to the country than terrorism.

The fact is that espionage is the most active department of scientific research in the USSR.... The Russians, who are very good in theoretical work but not so good on technological application, found it quicker to plunder our laboratories than to develop their own research. It is not expensive and the returns are high....

Now, particularly from the seventies, the Eastern bloc, which was voraciously trying to make good its lag, was seized with insatiable curiosity in France. It swallowed everything, showing particular relish for French industry's strong sectors: aviation, computers, electronics, laser beams, fiber optics, the chemical and nuclear industries, and, of course, the arms industry. The DST men exhausted themselves following phoney diplomats who showed an interest in all spheres from politics to food and from aviation to pharmacy.

There were two possible remedies for this Red tide -- 700 Soviets enjoy diplomatic status:

-- The homeopathic remedy using repeated doses. This was the disputed method used by the former government, which from 1974 to 1980 expelled nearly 30 Eastern bloc diplomats caught stealing secrets in dribs and drabs.

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-- Another solution was surgery without anesthetic. That was the drastic remedy chosen in 1971 by the British, who sent home 105 excessively inquisitive people.

The DST, but also the General Directorate of Foreign-Security [DGSE] -- formerly Alexandre de Marenches' Foreign Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service [SIDE] -- had called for the scalpel and surgical knife several times. It was in vain.

After the DST chief's account, Mitterrand demanded a complete report on the Soviets' activity in France. And the Interior Ministry soon could not speak too highly of the DST, consecrated as "the best police department." Yves Bonnet, the new boss who replaced Marcel Chalet, who had reached retirement age, hammered the same message home. Rather than chasing the Soviets, the DST decided to forestall them. A list was drawn up of interesting targets and they were awaited there. The thick file grew thicker. It was placed on Francois Mitterrand's desk at the beginning of the year. The president apparently took several days to examine it. He knew the matter was disturbing; what he discovered was worse. Let us leaf through it, too.

Serving Officers [Officiers Traitants] and "Trainees"

First there is Gennadiy Travkov, the consul in Marseilles, who was expelled in 1980. His is a kind of classic case. So much so that the DST made a film of the Travkov affair which is shown to threatened industrial sectors.

As soon as he arrived at Marseilles' Saint-Charles station in August 1976, Travkov was watched by the DST. He was taking over the post of another experienced officer, former consul Igor... a tough, clever, and skillful man who it had never succeeded in faulting. This time the DST wanted its revenge and wanted to bring down the new consul, who is in fact -- as it knew -- a lieutenant colonel in the GRU (military intelligence as opposed to the KGB, which covers all kinds of intelligence).

Travkov set to work as soon as he arrived. He was responsible for the scientific sector and for space research and established many contacts and had many meetings. For 3 years the counterespionage service watched his attempts to establish "contacts." In his first attempt, the consul tackled a Marseilles laboratory governed by the National Center for Scientific Research [CNRS] -- one of the most advanced laboratories in France working for both the civilian and military sectors. For instance, it was working on infrared rays, sonar and lasers for detecting targets. This "top secret" research also relates to submarine detection. Travkov used an intermediary to gain access to the laboratory. Nikolay Sobolev, a Soviet "trainee" and expert on lasers, applied to spend a period in the Marseilles laboratory. Once installed, he introduced his friend Travkov, consul in Marseilles, to his "colleagues." But the French, warned by the DST, rejected this invasive friendship. Sobolev returned to Paris. He was shamelessly used by his controls, squeezed dry, finally slipped part of a laser head into his pocket, and was ignominiously expelled from France and banished from the scientific community.

This explains the DST's reservations about the growing number of applications for training periods and scientific exchanges coming from Eastern bloc countries -- around 100 per year. "First," an expert stated, "it is often a swindle. They offer us nuclear engineers or physicists. We send them ethnological trainees or human sciences researchers.... And second, to obtain their visas, the Eastern bloc trainees are often forced to collaborate with the secret services."

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That was true of the young woman who, when visiting an aeronautics factory, used her woolen gloves to take samples of filings (to determine the alloys). It was also true of the engineer who collected small samples of fiber optics under his adhesive soles. Finally, more recently during a visit a young Soviet succeeded in removing a shaving of the metal used to manufacture nuclear boilers. In addition to this, they take back kilograms of documents in their luggage.

Let us return to the more serious activities of Comrade Travkov, Marseilles consul, who, after the failure on the lasers, became passionately interested in other subjects. He showed interest in underwater biology and at the same time set out to win over a research worker specializing in space research. He invited him and his wife to his residence; the two wives became friendly. But Travkov went too far. He casually proposed to help the research worker buy a boat or even -- why not -- an apartment. The research worker came back to earth and became alarmed. Travkov failed completely once again. Time was running short. His stay in France -- usually 4 to 5 years -- was drawing to a close. Travkov, who preferred the deep creeks of Cassis to the shores of the Black Sea, stepped up his activity in order to be kept in France.

He was hard pressed and was to make the fatal mistake. During a degree ceremony at Aix-en-Provence university, he met a senior officer, a former pilot working at the Istres Air Base who was trying to go over to private industry. The consul, himself a former pilot, started a conversation with him; they hit it off. Travkov gave him his card and invited the officer to visit him. But he went too quickly once again. He was too quick in offering to find the officer work. A warning light flashed under the officer's cap and he went straight to the DST. "There are two solutions," the experts told him. "Either you break with him now and everything stops, or you play a double game and hand Travkov to us completely wrapped up. But take care, it will be a long job and may be dangerous."

"It's a deal!" the former pilot answered. The adventure lasted 7 months. It was not easy following Travkov. The meetings usually took place in Carry-le-Rouet near Marseilles. Travkov left home very early to get there. He spent 4 hours taking a secure route. The "planted pilot" played his role perfectly. He even received some money, very little -- the KGB is known for being mean -- and handed the consul documents carefully chosen -- by the DST.

Finally, the DST arranged for him to be "caught red-handed." The officer was warned and asked to entice the Soviet consul to a meeting by laying a fine trap: the Doppler system for the Mirage 2000 and the complete plans of the Istres base. Armed with these documents, Travkov could spend a few more happy years on the coast. The consul fell into the trap, or more precisely, into the Carry-le-Rouet rubbish pile where he met with his agent. As he was pocketing the documents, men emerged from behind the mounds of rubbish. He merely had time to throw down the papers and express surprise at those confidential documents fluttering amid the rubbish. Exit Travkov. For him it was goodbye to the sweet-smelling creeks.

That one was caught, but when spies succeed brilliantly, you scarcely hear anything about their exploits. You do not even know that they were active. The KGB and GRU members are hand-picked. The best university students are chosen for the intelligence schools -- the most famous is Center 101 situated in the suburbs of Moscow. The bosses of the services are high-ranking people.

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The dazzling appointment of former KGB chief Yuriy Andropov bears witness to that.

Some 120 of the 700 Soviets who enjoy diplomatic status in France actually hold diplomatic posts. Around 160 of their cohorts are "officers" trained in the KGB and GRU schools. In addition to this, there are the agents from the other seven Eastern bloc countries.

"For a long time," an expert explained, "at least one-third of the Soviet 'Diplomats' posted here have been intelligence 'pros.' And we always underestimate their number. Each time a defector or intelligence passed on by friendly countries has enabled us to review our calculations and identify the spies who had come to our country, there were always more of them than expected."

"The DST is not as 'paranoid' as people would like to suggest," this expert added. "We do not see spies everywhere. We do not see enough of them.... And of course there are also the 'illegal entrants'...and the 'sleepers,' who have not been involved in intelligence for years but are awaiting the opportunity or the order to act."

Indeed, Eastern bloc espionage involves two types of secret fighter in the field. There are the "legal" ones who are "serving officers" used under diplomatic cover. If arrested, they only run the risk of being declared persona non grata and courteously escorted to the border. The "illegal" ones, however, spies introduced into France under a false identity and a false nationality, live more dangerously. They are like the "infiltrators" who often arrive from a "country of transit" after whitewashing themselves by posing as Eastern bloc refugees.

Their mission is to integrate the host country and climb as high as possible up the social ladder. The "sleeping" agents, not called upon much at the beginning of their careers, are "woken up" when they reach an interesting position.

All these people work actively to establish contacts. Some of the people "approached" -- out of imprudence, ideology, blackmail, naivety or even self-interest -- get their fingers caught.

One of the Soviet intelligence services' favorite targets is still immigrants from Eastern bloc countries installed in France but who still have relatives on the other side of the Iron Curtain. They are easier to frighten and manipulate....

Igor Zolotayevskiy, a Soviet immigrant naturalized French, was recently caught in that way. This modest architect was working in AGARD [expansion unknown], a NATO agency which gathers technological data in the aeronautics sphere for Europe. For Vladimir Rybachenkov, a Soviet secret agent in UNESCO, it was a good catch. The little clerk had access to the agency's classified documents. For years, Zolotayevskiy systematically photocopied everything which bore the seal "confidential," "secret," or "top secret." This lowly spy did not even know what he was stealing. After his arrest, it was impossible to gauge the scale of the damage, which was probably considerable. While the little Frenchman was reflecting on his action in prison, "Rybachenkov," his "serving officer," was discreetly asked to go and use his special talents elsewhere.

[Annex continues on back pages of report]

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The Ideologists

Although the serving officers are mainly interested in industrial espionage and its military applications, they do not neglect a more subtle form of intelligence: political information and its counterpart, misinformation. For instance, for around 20 years they secretly financed the confidential letter of Jean-Charles Pathe, a minor, active and discreet man. The son of the famous cinema industrialist had two loves: journalism and the USSR, which he admired unreservedly. In the sixties he devoted an impassioned work to it, "Essay on the Soviet Phenomenon," for which he received Moscow's congratulations. His passion was such that he was married, briefly -- for 3 months -- to Ariana Gedeonova, a former Miss USSR, who meanwhile became a French citizen....

Thus, when Pathe launched a confidential letter called SYNTHESIS, he merely had to beg to receive a meager handful of rubles (Fr100,000) -- another example of the KGB's "stinginess." Nonetheless, Pathe was politically useful. Aside from providing the Soviets with a platform for misinformation, he enabled them to understand the squabbles between Rocard and Mitterrand, for instance. For Pathe provided the organization with long biographies of prominent people for which the Kremlin is greedy. Back in the sixties, Georges Paques, a senior NATO official who was working for the Soviets, had indulged in these La Bruyere-style exercises which flatter their authors. They make these armchair spies think they are pulling a few strings in the shadows and helping direct the course of history. To swell their pride, the KGB has no hesitation in sending them secret letters of congratulation signed Khrushchev or Brezhnev and bombards them with appointments as Red Army colonels or with the Order of Lenin. Jean-Charles Pathe was going to pay for his secret vanities. In 1980, he received a 5-year prison sentence despite the fact that he was 70 years old. And his sentence was for very modest treason. With Jean-Charles Pathe, we enter the disturbing world of agents and infiltrators.

The Infiltrators

Pierre Cardot is a typical infiltrator. This 20-year old Czechoslovak arrived in France one fine day and asked for naturalization. His story was moving: His grandfather, a French soldier who left to fight in Bohemia in 1914, was imprisoned there. After his release, he married a Czechoslovak, Pierre's grandmother. Pierre Cardot was naturalized and agreed to do his military service like any good Frenchman. He was an excellent soldier and impressed his colonel so much that the nice guy suggested that he join the SDECE (now the GDSE, the French espionage service). His knowledge of Czech would be marvelous there. In the "swimming pool" -- the SDECE's nickname -- he worked in the monitoring service responsible for intercepting messages from Czechoslovak networks. Cardot became friendly with his boss, a captain, who could not speak too highly of him.

Everything started to go wrong when the DST intercepted secret messages sent by the Czechoslovaks to one of their agents in Paris. The investigation led to the brilliant Cardot's apartment. "Such a nice boy," the caretaker explained, "who spends all his leisure time listening to music. And he is so nice, he even fixed my vacuum cleaner, which was disturbing the music." In fact, the vacuum cleaner was distorting the Czechoslovak's radio messages.... In DST headquarters, Cardot was sick with fear.

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He fiercely denied the charges, but when he was told that he was going to be taken to a hospital, he thought of the Soviet establishments. He was prepared to confess everything to avoid going there.... He then confessed that he had been hired by the Czechoslovak services when he was 16 and specially trained for his mission. Following his arrest, the DST and the military security service examined all the naturalization files from Czechoslovakia and detected two other sleepers in France, one of whom was a chief inspector at police headquarters.

Open Espionage

A more recent case is dividing scientists, the DST is in no doubt: Rolf Dobbertin, a CNRS research worker arrested in 1979 for "collaboration with the enemy," is an infiltrator. This 45-year old physicist, originally from East Germany, defected to the FRG at the age of 22. He then came to France, where he submitted a physics thesis and specialized in plasma physics at the CNRS. In 1979, Werner Stieler, a defector from the GDR, denounced Dobbertin and supplied the file of all the documents handed over by the physicist. When arrested, the research worker admitted working for the Eastern bloc: "I was a soldier on a mission," he said. He admitted using secret methods for sending his messages: blank carbon and invisible ink. On the other hand, he denied handing over scientific secrets. "All I supplied is available in good specialized bookshops." And that is true. The question is, is it treason to supply available information? Yes, the DST replied, he was paid by the Eastern bloc services. No, the research workers who defended him replied. Dobbertin, who has been under preventive detention for 4 years and was due to stand trial last year, is a victim of the left's arrival in office since the suppression of the state security court delayed his trial. He seems to have been forgotten in his prison cell.

His case is that of "open research:" It is the simplest but also the most profitable. Examining journals, reports, specialized works, and scientific publications makes it possible to gather more than 80 percent of intelligence. Clue and scissors produce surprising results when wielded by an expert. The fact is that in the Western world the scientific world readily exchanges information and work according to a very respectable code, and very often for the good of mankind. But this is also because to succeed in the West and to obtain finance and aid or simply to secure recognition, the researcher must make his work known and compare himself with his neighbor. However, any research can have a military application, even if its aim is peaceful, civilian and apparently devoid of strategic interest. Some of these documents may be found in scientific publications. A lead or an indication can save months of research and make it possible to identify and locate new industries.

The USSR Embassy is one of the main subscribers to periodicals. Some scraps of secrets have thus slipped under the Iron Curtain. This manna gleaned throughout the world by officers, agents, or research assistants is swallowed, reprocessed, and digested by a vast scientific administration. The best known of these departments is the State Committee for Science and Technology.

The Turncoats

There is no doubt about Sergey Fabyev. He was certainly a major spy. He was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in 1979, and he was the head of the single major Soviet network in France completely dismantled in Europe since the war. And what a network!

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The leaks he prompted endangered NATO's defense system. This son of a White Russian officer who emigrated to Yugoslavia and then to France is a romantic. When the Soviets traced him in 1963, Fabyiev, who speaks Russian, explained that he felt he was coming into contact with the Great Russia about which his father spoke. He ran a small enterprise dealing in fire protection equipment which enabled him to travel. He went to Moscow three times via Switzerland and Italy to learn his "profession" in the GRU's crash courses. On his return he set up a sound network, one of whose pillars was Giovanni Ferrero, a former Italian Chauffeur who had become secretary to Italian General Gairi, who was NATO military attache. He photographed almost 1 cubic meter of some of the most confidential documents, including the key to the NATO military aircraft communication code and the plans for the Lockheed F-104 aircraft.

The other pillar of Fabyiev's team was Marc Lefevre, an electronics engineer in the CII-Benelux-Ball company, who had worked on the computer program for the Albion Plateau nuclear missiles.... Thus he slipped several documents into the good Fabyiev's bag, including those concerning the surface-to-surface missiles' firing controls. It was a fabulous haul. Nonetheless, these elite spies were, as usual, poorly paid. The engineer Lefevre cursed the Soviets and grew angry over his expense accounts, which he considered very paltry. Network chief Fabyiev, who was better off, had a transmitter which enabled him to contact Moscow central. But he also went through the Soviet Embassy in Paris, thanks to a sophisticated radio device which the Russians had installed in his car.

When cornered, Fabyiev revealed his secrets. He enabled the French in turn to decode Soviet messages. That was music to the ears of the DST and DGSE, which had been picking up indecipherable cables for years. One "listener" had said sadly during his retirement party: "I have never brought about the arrest of any spy." After the Fabyiev affair, he was recalled. He was able to decode a historic message: the one which the Russians sent in the sixties to congratulate the network which had stolen the Concorde plans. The Tupolev is so similar to it that it was nicknamed Concordski.

Nonetheless, legal spies and secret agents are only one element in the Soviet espionage multinational. It is also necessary to talk of commercial relations. How many French industrialists, lured by a deal with the USSR, have agreed to supply samples, technical manuals and plans of their products...! And then came the disappointment, the magnificent project for a factory in the Urals laded into the snow, and shortly afterward an identical copy of their product appeared in the Eastern bloc countries.

"The fact is that when you suggest that the Eastern bloc is interested in everything -- from pots for baby food (for military rations) to antisubmarine combat -- many people smile. On the other hand, nobody smiles when you say that the Japanese are interested in models for ready-made clothes or pressure cookers. Thirty years of economic espionage in the past ensured that country's industrial power," a technician said.

International cooperation can also sometimes lead the Europeans to be imprudent with equipment which can be used for military purposes. For instance, the Americans did not appreciate the fact that cosmonaut Jean-Loup Chretien's flight was accompanied by the loan of very special U.S.-made cameras which make it possible to detect the light of a candle at a distance of more than 300 km. It is easy to imagine their possible uses.

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This was the disturbing report submitted to the president of the republic. In addition, the DST reported several current operations: a research assistant in the French Coal Board was being controlled in Meaux by a Russian officer (Patrick Guerrier, the imprudent research assistant was arrested); and above all the arrest of an important member of the trade mission who had been caught red-handed. After considering the matter for several days, the president gave the go ahead. It was one way of sending a message which was easier to decode than those sent by the Eastern bloc spies. It was an operation which had obvious external and internal advantages. But this operation posed one question: How many of them should be expelled? Should it be 150, 100, or 50? This critical number was the real political test. A short list was chosen: 47 diplomats, which was enough to undermine some Soviet networks. The figure was not chosen at random: the French Embassy in Moscow has 46 diplomats.... But our Russian friends were told that another batch was ready if there was too strong a reaction.

"We are sure of winning at this game and of expelling more than them," a senior official said. "Our reserves in Paris are bigger than theirs. Each man counts for them. It will take them 1 or 2 years to replace these professionals if they are allowed to do so. But it is good to have 2 years' respite."

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